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Sports & Leisure

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Ian Butcher crosses the finish line in the 400m race at the Royal Canadian Track and Field Championships in Sherbrooke, Quebec. It was Butcher's first of two gold medals as he later added another in the 1600m relay.

Photo courtesy of Royal Canadian Legion

At Legion meet

Reluctant 400m runner wins two national titles

When Ian Butcher started the track season, he had never run the 400m. And he really had no interest in it either. But with the Bishop Reding track team needing a runner to fill out the 400m relay team, Butcher was enlisted by coach Maureen Morrison.

"I had always run distance or sprints in (elementary) school," said the Georgetown resident. "I didn't even want to run the 400. I sort of got pushed into it."

Butcher has warmed up to the event over the last five months, though.

A couple of national titles will do that.

Butcher capped an outstanding season by claiming two gold medals at the Royal Canadian Legion Track & Field Championships in Sherbrooke, Quebec—one in the 15-and-under

boys 400m, the other in the 1,600m relay.

The 14-year-old knocked more than four seconds off his 400m time during the high school season, which culminated with a silver medal at the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association (OFSAA) track and field meet.

At the time Morrison said, "he's gotten faster every time out, I could see another second coming off (his time of 52.5 seconds)."

Needing a victory at the provincial Legion meet to advance to nationals Butcher defeated the Sarnia rival who topped him at OFSAA by half a second, finishing in 52.15 seconds.

Prior to nationals, he shaved even more time off at an Ontario Track and Field Association, finishing second in 51.69 seconds.

Still, he wasn't considering himself as one of the contenders at nationals, at least not until he overheard a conversation

"I was really nervous because it was a national track and field meet," Butcher said. "Then I heard someone from Nova Scotia talking about some guy from Ontario who was running a 51. That gave me a lot of confidence."

That carried over on to the track where Butcher turned in his personal best of 51.47, making the prediction of his high school coach come true.

Butcher then joined Ontario teammates in the 1600m relay.

"Coming off my 400m, I was hoping to just make it around the track," he said.

Not only did he make it around, but he and his Ontario teammates did it faster than anyone else bringing a second gold medal.

Butcher also turned in a sixth place finish in the 800m but it is his new specialty that he's looking forward to next season. With another year of midget eligibility, some school records and a provincial high school title are not out of the question.

Not bad for an event he didn't even want to take part in.

"I'd say it's turned out pretty well," Butcher said.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



Ian Butcher displays the two gold medals he won the the Royal Canadian Legion Track and Field Championships. The 14-year-old won gold in the 400m and the 1600m relay.

Photo by Herb Garbutt

Raiders setting sights lower than in past three seasons

The downside of success in a developmental league is that you can't keep your players forever. Eventually teams at a higher level will come calling.

So, after the Georgetown Raiders' three most successful campaigns in team history, it should not come as a surprise that the team is taking a hit this season.

Gone are Stace Page and Mike Knoepfli, the team's two leading scorers. Page, who would have been overage anyway, accepted a scholarship to St. Lawrence University while Knoepfli will be attending Cornell on a scholarship. The Raiders knew before last season began that it would be the last season for the two veterans.

But also gone are two promising young players the Raiders hoped would help ease the transition—defenceman Dan Rogers and winger

Daryl Knowles. Both have moved on to the Ontario Hockey League, Rogers with Owen Sound and Knowles with St. Mike's.

Add in the loss of defencemen Brydon Butterworth and Adam Russell, who are both moving on to attend school, and the Raiders skate into the 2000/01 season as a team in transition.

Only three players—Scott MacDonald, Bill Fetherston and Jeff Duke—remain from that first turnaround season that saw the team go from six wins to 27 in a single year. Duke is back for his third stint as a Raider after a year of Jr. B hockey in London.

The Raiders will have two more rookie skates on Friday and Saturday after which they will pare their training camp roster from 70 players to 30. Those players competing for jobs will have a chance to

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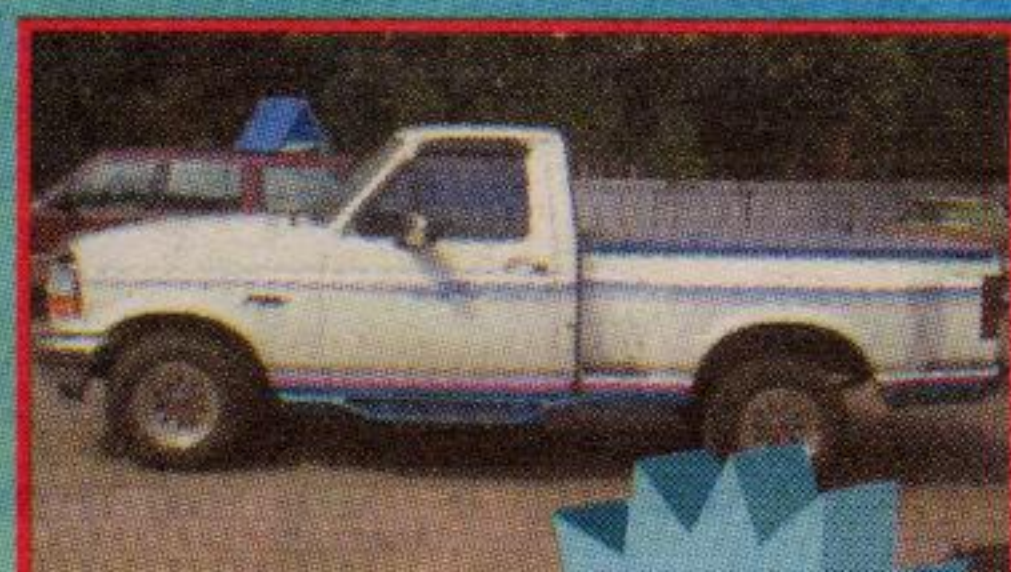
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